

Memories from the Office Party

Holiday parties are a great way to connect with your coworkers and supervisors on a personal level. While the mood may be festive, it's important to remember that your behavior during office holiday parties is also a reflection of you as an employee. Don't let the lingering memory everyone takes from this year's holiday party be an embarrassing one about you. As a business function, a holiday party can be your opportunity to shine by creating goodwill among your staff members. It can also be an opportunity for you to meet your director and other senior executives whom you might not have met before (or not have had opportunities to speak with, perhaps about that one great idea of yours!)



Teen Sleep Patterns

If "early to bed, early to rise" doesn't work for your teen, there's no need to scowl, blame TV, or proclaim that he or she is exhibiting laziness. Recent research shows the biological clock of a teenager is just plain different. It appears to *take longer for a teen to need sleep once awake*, creating the tendency for teens to go to bed later and, as a result, to sleep in. It's part of the normal adolescent package. Sleep for this age group is vital, though, and only 15 percent get the required amount, an average nine hours a night.



Source: National Sleep Foundation.

Fortify Your Brain with Fruit

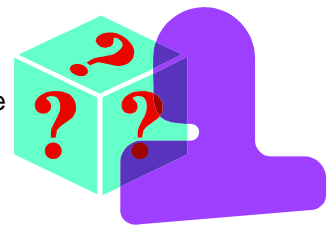
Multiple studies related to eating fruits and vegetables seem to point to a previously underemphasized benefit—reduced risk of stroke. The benefit appears to be due to a reduction in blood pressure and cholesterol associated with eating fruits and vegetables. Researchers examined studies involving a total of about 250,000 people. Each pointed to similar results: eating more fruits and vegetables (with an emphasis on fruits) reduces risk of stroke. Examine your health habits and family risk of stroke, talk to your doctor, and dive into a cornucopia!



Source: Neurology Magazine, 65:1193-1197 November 2005

Taking the Mystery Out of Mental Illness

One-fifth of Americans suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder during any given year. The exact causes of mental disorders are unknown, but an explosive growth in research has brought us closer to the answers than ever before. Like physical illnesses, mental illnesses have a biological component to them: inherited dispositions interact with triggering environmental factors to produce mental illness. Understanding this fact has taken much of the mystery and stigma out of mental illness and has led more people to seek help. State-of-the-art treatment for mental illness is very effective—as effective as treatments for high blood pressure, cancer, and arthritis. Contact the EAP to learn more.



Source: American Psychiatric Association

Avoid Online Investment Scams

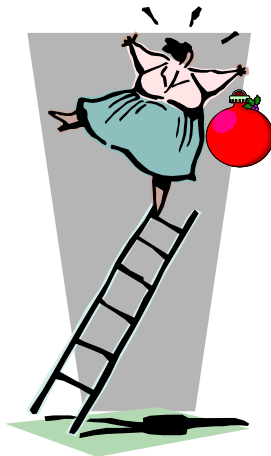


Most of us live by the adage “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” However, it is especially important to keep this in mind when exploring the world of finance and investing, particularly online investing. The desire to maximize your retirement nest egg or return on investment can place you at risk for an investment scam that could leave you penniless. Be wary of high-yield investment programs (HYIPs) or other offers that tout extraordinarily high returns like 20%–50% per month. Typically, a scam operation sets up shop in a foreign country in a manner that helps the scammers avoid legal scrutiny. These investment “clubs” may be Ponzi or pyramid schemes that benefit only the thieves behind them—you may never discover what happened to your money, and retrieving it may be impossible. *Warning signs:* someone pressuring you to invest quickly or to risk losing the opportunity, no available financial statements from the HYIP, a need to be “referred” to the program by another investor before you can participate, the inability to learn about people running the company and their track record for successful investing, exotic claims of using “secret or no-fail” methods of trading financial markets, “risk-free returns”, rules that don’t allow access to your investment or profits for weeks or months after the initial investment.

Source: North American Securities Administrators Association

Falling for the Season

Keept the fun in the holiday season by keeping in mind an important safety fact: there is a greater risk of fall-related injuries during this time of the year. This is largely due to the fact that you might be tempted to stand on a chair, climb on a table, or use the unsteady arm of a sofa in your effort to put up your seasonal decorations. Each year, thousands of people fall as they get ready for the holidays. Most falls (about half) are from ladders while hanging decorations. Falling off roofs comes second. Falling off furniture is third. The “fall season” is November 1–January 31. Holiday injuries are preventable through the use of common sense and safety precautions. For example, never go above the top two rungs on your ladder. What’s more, practicing safety now will lead to improved safety behaviors throughout the year.



Source: Centers for Disease Control, *Fall-Related Injuries During the Holiday Season*

Making a Good Habit Stick

What causes good habits? The simple answer is repetition. Whether better time management, being more organized, or exercising regularly, habits are used to obtain our goals. Bad habits hold us back and prevent us from reaching our potential. Ben Franklin once wrote, “It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.” However, it is also true that *good* habits are difficult to break! Recognize the benefits a new habit brings. Select simple actions to repeat. Then get motivated to ignite behaviors that you want to become habits. Next, feed that motivation with inspiration, to reinforce habits. Good habits protect us by making good use of the human tendency to fall into consistent patterns of behavior. Take advantage of this trait and take your life where you want it to go.



Reaching Out During the Holidays

If reaching out to the poor is an important part of your holiday season, you should know that the most difficult needs for lower income people to meet are not necessarily for food. They are for day-to-day essentials not available at emergency food banks and pantries, especially disposable items that you may use every day, from toothpaste to Q-tips and from diapers to detergent. So if you give gift certificates for these things, or from drugstores for things like prescriptions, vitamins, and other necessities, you can really help a family’s finances—not just during the holiday season but throughout the year. Avoid trendy gifts and think practically. Additionally, anything that can relieve parental stress can be enormously helpful to poor families—tutoring children, babysitting, or even running errands.

